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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/651,871	08/29/2003	Horace Winston Hale	HORA.P0101US	9347

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EXAMINER

REIMERS, ANNETTE R

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3733

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
3 MONTHS	03/07/2007	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

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Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/651,871	Applicant(s) HALE ET AL.	
	Examiner Annette R. Reimers	Art Unit 3733	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 08 December 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 and 41-58 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 and 41-58 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 29 August 2003 and 09 June 2006 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1-2, 4-6, 8-11, 14-17, 19-20, 41-44, 46-49, 51-55, 57-58 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by the Soboleski et al. (US Patent Publication Number 2002/0151895).

Soboleski et al. disclose a facet implant comprising a superior implant, 14, having an articulating surface and a fixation surface and configured for placement on a superior articular facet, a inferior implant, 16, having an articulating surface and a fixation surface and configured for placement on an inferior articular facet and for interacting with a translaminar fixation mechanism, wherein the articulating surface of the superior implant and the articulating surface of the inferior implant are configured to interact, and a translaminar fixation mechanism, at 19, for securing the inferior implant to the inferior articular facet (see figures 2 and 3A-3F and paragraph 0043). The superior implant and the inferior implant comprise a surface fixation mechanism, e.g. 54, 64, 68, 72, 74, 84 or 88 such as one or more pegs, one or more pips, ridges, or one or more screws (see

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figure 3A-3F paragraphs 0049-0052). Furthermore, Soboleski et al. teach the use of an implant composed of at least one of cobalt-chromium alloy, ceramic, UHMWPE, pyrolytic carbon, and Ti/Al/V (see paragraph 0048).

With regard to the statement of intended use and other functional statements, they do not impose any structural limitations on the claims distinguishable over Soboleski et al., which is capable of being used as claimed if one so desires to do so. *In re Casey*, 152 USPQ 235 (CCPA 1967) and *In re Otto*, 136 USPQ 458, 459 (CCPA 1963). Furthermore, the law of anticipation does not require that the reference "teach" what the subject patent teaches, but rather it is only necessary that the claims under attack "read on" something in the reference. *Kalman v. Kimberly Clark Corp.*, 218 USPQ 781 (CCPA 1983). Furthermore, the manner in which a device is intended to be employed does not differentiate the claimed apparatus from prior art apparatus satisfying the claimed structural limitations. *Ex parte Masham*, 2 USPQ2d 1647 (1987).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 3, 12, and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Soboleski et al. (US Patent Publication Number 2002/0151895).

Soboleski et al. disclose the claimed invention except for the inferior implant being configured to interact with the translaminar fixation mechanism such that the

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translaminar fixation mechanism ranges from about 0 degrees to about 15 degrees offset and the superior and inferior implants ranging from about 2 mm thick to about 15 mm thick. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to construct the device of Soboleski et al. with the inferior implant being configured to interact with the translaminar fixation mechanism such that the translaminar fixation mechanism ranges from about 0 degrees to about 15 degrees offset and the superior and inferior implants ranging from about 2 mm thick to about 15 mm thick, since it has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art. In re Aller, 105 USPQ 233. Furthermore, Soboleski et al. teach that the implants can be of various shapes and sizes (see paragraphs 0045-0047).

Claims 7, 18, 45, 50 and 56 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Soboleski et al. (US Patent Publication Number 2002/0151895) in view of Yuan et al. (US Patent Publication Number 2005/0143818).

Soboleski et al. disclose the claimed invention except for the fixation surfaces having a porous coating. Yuan et al. disclose a facet implant and teach a fixation surface having a porous coating in order to promote bone ingrowth and fixation (see paragraph 0096). It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to construct the device of Soboleski et al. with the fixation surfaces having a porous coating, in view of Yuan et al., in order to promote bone ingrowth and fixation.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to the 101 rejection are persuasive. The objection has been withdrawn.

Applicant's arguments filed December 08, 2006 have been fully considered, but they are not persuasive. Examiner understands applicant's point regarding the implant of Soboleski. However, applicant has not explicitly claimed that the superior and inferior implants are separate, i.e. neither integral nor monolithic. Therefore, distinct components 14 and 16, of Soboleski, can be considered implants.

Conclusion

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Annette R. Reimers whose telephone number is (571) 272-7135. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday.

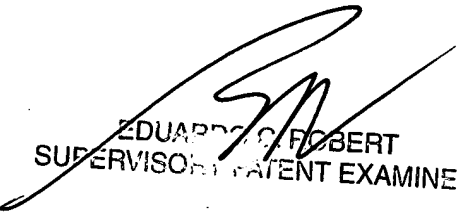
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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Eduardo Robert can be reached on (571) 272-4719. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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EDUARDO C. ROBERT
SUPERVISOR, PATENT EXAMINER